



Panel hopes letter campaign will help freeway fight

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The Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee will meet Monday to finalize letters it has drafted to federal, state, city and other leaders asking questions about South Mountain Freeway issues.

Freeway foes opposed to the Pecos Road alignment through Ahwatukee Foothills got the most hopeful sign in years this week when regional leaders drafted a letter asking Gov. Janet Napolitano to negotiate with the Gila River Indian Community.

Doug Cole, a political lobbyist and chairman of the planning committee, said Tuesday that the group hopes to "launch the letters" after the meeting.

The Maricopa Association of Government's executive committee will make a decision on the letter to the governor in April .

"This is a logical step as the issue progresses," Cole said. "It's always been the contention of the Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee that we need to dialogue with the neighbors to the south and make it a win-win situation."

Cole said he assumes that state and possibly federal officials have been talking to leaders of the Gila River Indian Community for a freeway alignment on tribal land.

Spokeswomen for Napolitano's office and the tribe's governing council said Monday that the groups have been talking about various issues.

Similar negotiations took place with the Salt River-Pima Community, which struck an 11th-hour deal years ago to build the Loop 101 on tribal land.

"I am under the assumption that there have been quiet discussions. I wouldn't say 'negotiations' because that infers there's an offer on the table to discuss one way or others. Discussions are being held quietly," Cole said.

"Having quiet discussions would be a normal course of business dealing with a sovereign government. Every layer of government would have a role, especially the state."

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People of Gila River Be Strong.

I know that the town of Ahwatukee may want us to believe that this freeway will help our economic development along I-10, but just like with the Cardinals Stadium Bid, is it really a good idea? I don't think so. We will not receive per capita from this venture like Salt River did there are too many of us. We will only be losing our land. We have been hospitable before and we ended up with miligan neighbors with plans that were not win win situations. Why do you think we live on a reservation now? It was not our choice. But this time the choice is ours.
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